

# **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Report**

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## Introduction

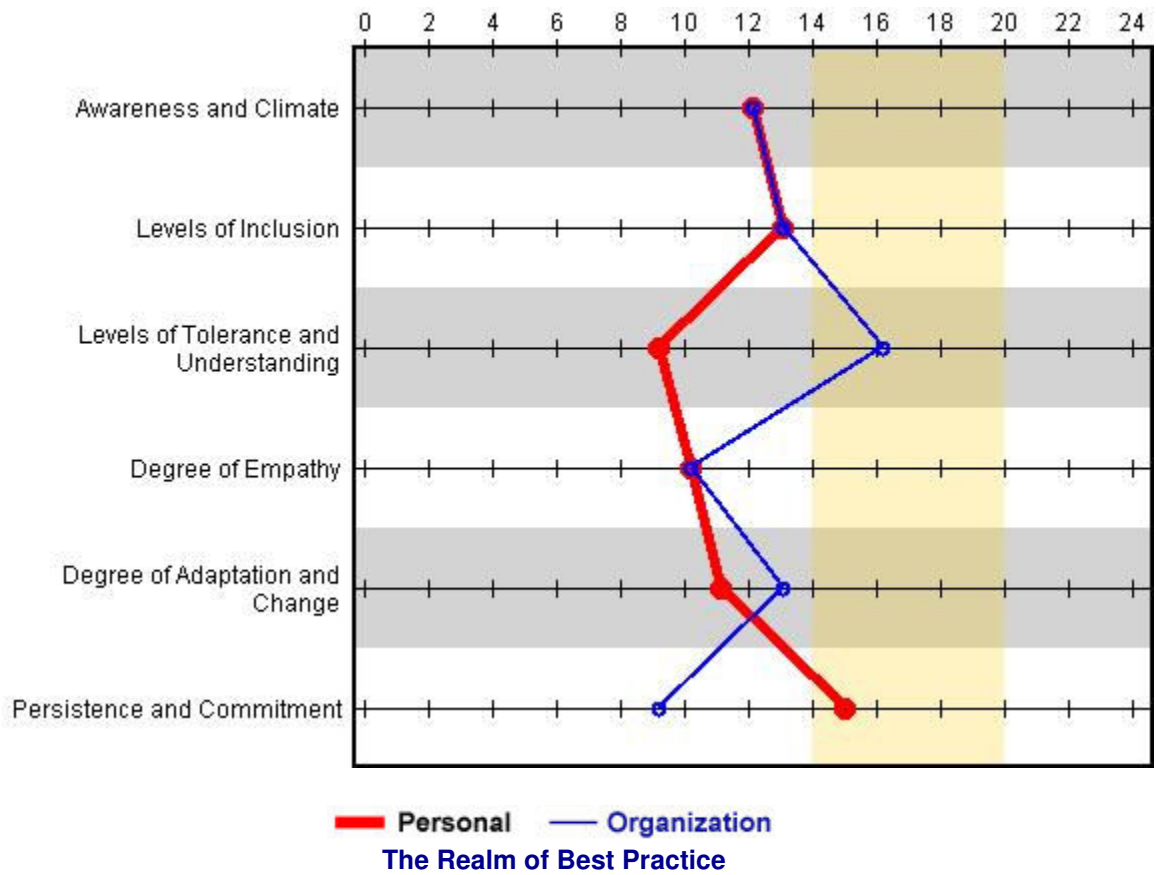
An organization's success rests heavily on how well it harnesses the array of skills and experiences of its employees while they remain a part of its workforce. How good is it at fostering teamwork? Does it bring together people of diverse backgrounds and styles in order to enhance creativity, solve problems more effectively, and discover new approaches to old issues? The organization must do all these things if it wants to achieve its goals and hold on to its best and brightest workers.

Many researchers and industry experts believe that the organizations that excel at these things have six characteristics in common-six sets of actions or attitudes that form the foundation of a successful team of people who take pride in together achieving greater levels of success. The steps can be thought of as a series of competencies that are progressively acquired by individuals and the organization as a whole, illustrated by a pyramid. Starting at the base of the competency pyramid and moving up, these six factors are:

1. Organizations and their employees develop an awareness of the benefits that can flow from cultural diversity, and establish and maintain a climate of mutual trust. They also recognize that this welcoming and trusting climate helps them grow and derive strength from the knowledge, skills, and experience that different people bring to the organization.
2. Minority groups feel a part of and are included in the major decision-making processes of the organization. Their views and ideas are genuinely valued and seen to be important.
3. Different beliefs, stated views, actions, and reactions are fully understood and are naturally tolerated and accepted as part of the rich overall "tapestry" of human behavior.
4. Warmth, sincerity, and goodwill are extended to every individual and group without applying stereotypes, so that each person feels high levels of mutual empathy.
5. Groups, and the organization as a whole, need to adapt and change when bias or prejudice toward people who are different from the majority begin to hold back the organization or the work of individual employees.
6. Individuals, and the organization as a whole, need to persist in their efforts to recognize diversity and cultural awareness shortfalls, commit to increasing overall knowledge, and seek to reap the long-term benefits from people's differences, rather than insist on similarity.

The Diversity and Cultural Awareness assessment details these steps as competencies in the sense that they are required attitudinal and behavioral changes if the organization is to harness all the skills and experiences of its members. The assessment uses these steps on the competency pyramid to give an individual the opportunity to rate their personal performance, as well as to assess the performance of the organization around them. Although this is a subjective judgment, the gaps between individual scores, organization scores, and best-practice scores can be a rich basis for further follow-up and action. Each of the above steps is described in more detail on the following page.

## YOUR SUMMARY SCORES



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCORES

Now that your individual score has been plotted, you should be in a position to:

1. **Review your personal awareness and commitment levels in each of the six categories.**
2. **Review the relative performance of the organization in terms of your perception of its scores in each competency category.**
3. **Compare your score and the organizational score for each competency area and study the gap between the two in each category.**
4. **Determine your priorities (for yourself and for the organization) in terms of changing behavior or actions.**

The essential value of any measurement assessment is in the extent to which it provides a useful indication about a current situation and some guidance in terms of what an individual can do to change it for the better. The individual can then analyze the results and decide whether any adjustments or changes are necessary or desirable.

The items on the assessment, when scored, should provide a useful basis for such a review. To deepen or extend this further, ask two or three of your colleagues to complete the profile as well, to see whether or not they share your perception about cultural diversity (especially as far as the wider organization is concerned). By averaging their scores and plotting them on the grid, you will create an interesting comparison between your own and the organization's awareness and commitment, as well as the awareness and commitment that others perceive to exist.

Whatever your scores (and whether they are yours alone or enhanced by the views of others), consider developing a stronger commitment in those competency areas you are the weakest in.

# THE SIX DIVERSITY & CULTURAL AWARENESS COMPETENCIES

## 1. Awareness and Climate

Any individual or organization that wants to bring about a greater appreciation of the prevailing levels of diversity (and derive direct benefits from it) needs to first build a strong foundation of awareness as a solid base of their "diversity pyramid." This foundation of awareness is created by trying to understand the different ways in which people or groups of people look, feel, believe, and act, and then becoming aware of the need to establish a climate of open, mutual trust. Diversity must be seen as a strength, not a weakness to be attacked.

## 2. Levels of Inclusion

Individuals and groups make many decisions on behalf of the organization each day. If the decision-making processes are controlled by only a few people or biased toward only one or two majority groups, the organization runs the risk of disenfranchising the groups in the minority, or of subordinating their interests and input. Inclusion requires that you not only give all individuals and groups an equal voice, but also that you make certain that every opinion is genuinely valued and considered worthy of equal consideration.

## 3. Levels of Tolerance and Understanding

Once awareness has been raised and people have been more equally included in organizational decision-making, there will be greater appreciation for the depth and breadth of people's diversity of beliefs, stated views, actions, and reactions. However, this does not necessarily lead to greater tolerance and/or understanding. Individuals and the organization as a whole need to reject intolerance of any kind and actively defend the right to offer a different view. More discussions need to be held concerning why people hold their particular views and perspectives.

## 4. Degree of Empathy

Empathy represents the highest level of understanding about another person's beliefs or viewpoint. It therefore reflects an individual's ability to put themselves in the shoes of another person and make a sincere and positive effort to appreciate their background or perspective-not judging or perceiving them according to stereotypes. Empathy is created by showing warm and genuine interest in the opinions of others and seeking to understand the unique underlying feelings and beliefs that might be influencing their words and/or actions.

## 5. Degree of Adaptation and Change

Most everyone can easily accommodate some level of cultural and general diversity in relation to our own perspective and even accept greater understanding of diversity on an occasional basis, but it is of little sustained value until cultural awareness fundamentally and permanently changes individuals and the organization as a whole. Such change is usually first reflected in policies, procedures, and principles, but must extend visibly to the day-to-day practices of every individual, so that these practices become the "normal" role models of behavior.

## 6. Persistence and Commitment

Every concerted effort to progress up through the diversity and cultural awareness competency pyramid does not necessarily lead to sustained success. Bias, prejudice, and discrimination will continue to prevail in less visible ways and occasionally undo much of the good work invested in changing attitudes. Individuals and organizations must maintain their commitment and persistence and no longer tolerate negative reactions from others about the new commitment. In addition, they must make active and ongoing cultural learning an indelible part of the workplace-it is through deeper education that we truly change ourselves.

**On the following pages, you will find each of the above competencies elaborated on. Each competency includes general action steps to improve in the future, a graph that details the raw scores for yourself and the organization for individual questions, and detailed action/coaching guidelines for individual and organization scores that total less than 3 (improvement scope is indicated).**

# 1. AWARENESS & CLIMATE

**If you are serious about becoming more aware of the diversity of people around you and the wealth of cultural resources within your organization, you will understand the need to develop an open-minded attitude and an enthusiasm for the journey toward greater enlightenment, which is in itself valuable and worthwhile. This typically means that each individual will need to reflect on whether their prevailing attitudes are closedminded or limited-and what can be done to change this. The goal is to do your part to create a climate that is welcoming and trusting of diversity of belief, opinion, and action.**

When workers actively talk about diversity and focus their minds on the strengths and the benefits that it can bring, they heighten awareness in general and change the organizational climate. They must draw attention to fear, trepidation, bias, discrimination, and prejudice at every opportunity when views and beliefs and people are different than what is reflected by the "majority."

The organization needs to help every individual at this fundamental level to understand the consequences should negative reactions to cultural diversity persist. Formal training can be mandated to help such individuals understand the role of their own upbringing, background, and personality, and to appraise their own beliefs, values, and customs relative to those of others. Such training can also involve people in early debate about how culture arises from the so-called "norms" that are created by such factors as:

- Racial background
- Country of origin
- Religious belief
- Type of work
- Family values
- Age group, generation
- Gender issues

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open, accepting climate:

## FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Make a concerted effort to spend more time reading about diversity and cultural issues so you increase your general knowledge about the subject.
2. Participate in discussions and meetings that focus on the prevailing culture and beliefs in the organization and the other cultures and beliefs that exist.
3. Involve yourself in diversity-awareness training, and actively participate in individual or group opportunities to learn more about your own culture and its characteristics.

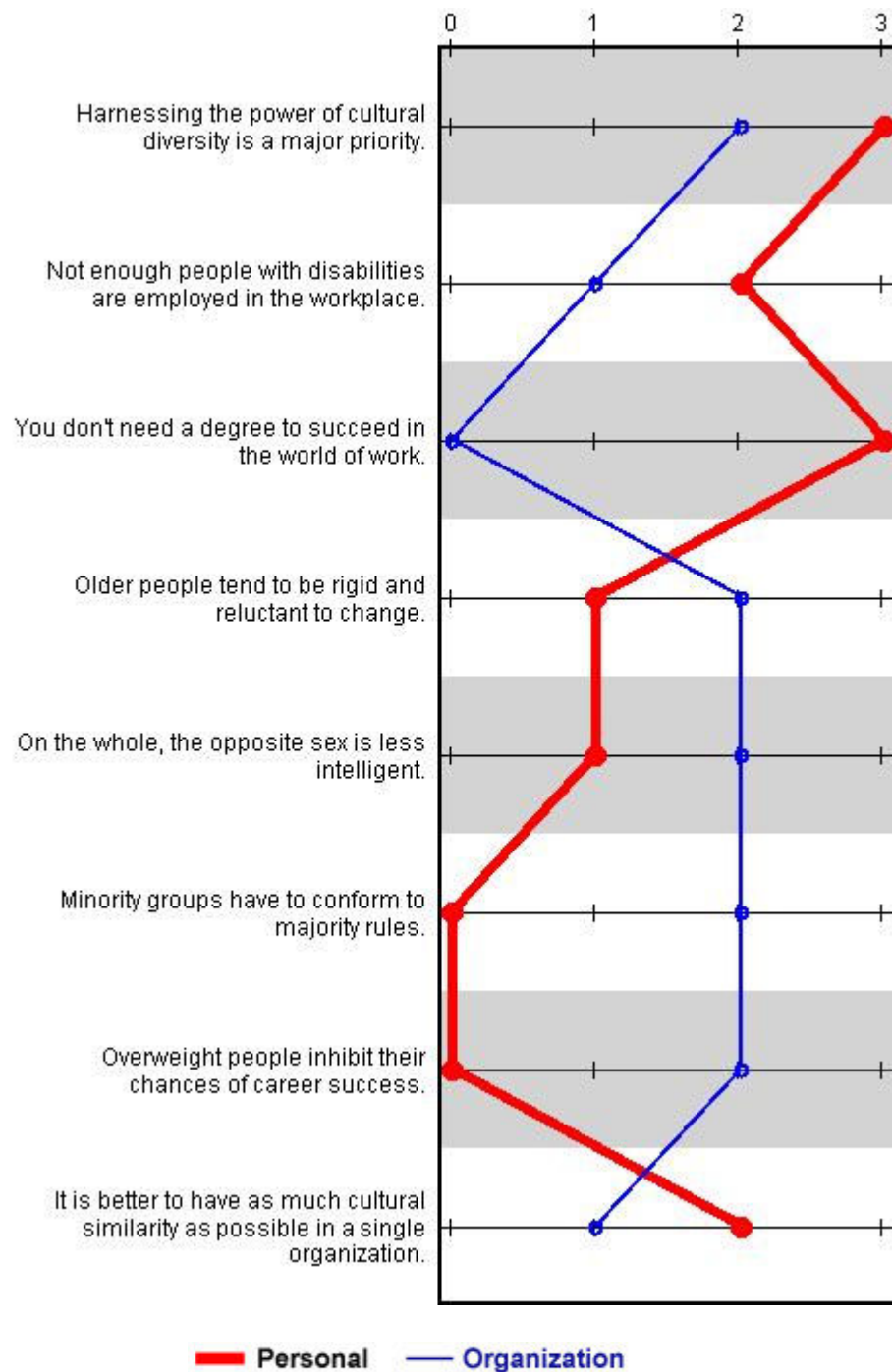
## FOR THE ORGANIZATION

1. Take the organization's "cultural temperature" by conducting opinion surveys.
2. Find specific and visible ways to demonstrate that senior managers are committed to greater diversity.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 12 out of a possible 24

Organization: 12 out of a possible 24



# Awareness and Climate AC-6

## **Minority groups have to conform to majority rules**

In most organizations (small to large) it is a matter of fact that a majority culture will dominate enterprise wide, decision making and expect minority groups to conform. Conformity is expected on the basis of some kind of false democratic principle that the large group or party of individuals can govern all others in a relatively self-interested way. Despite this widely prevailing viewpoint, majority cultural groups are neither elected nor 'in office' for a fixed term. As such, even a strong mono-culture needs to take a much more inclusive and long term view.

Best practice organizations assess the extent to which all or most of the so called minority groups are involved in enterprise wide decision making and work hard at helping the majority culture to understand that they must enfranchise the entire organization and all of its cultures (and even let some minority group decisions prevail). This is particularly true in multi national enterprises where the majority culture in one country may unfairly and unhelpful override a minority culture that is much closer or more in tune to the customer and markets that they serve.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I let the majority culture dictate the climate in which organizational decisions are made?
2. Am I prepared to take genuine account of minority views or opinions when enterprise wide decisions need to be made?
3. Do I expect the majority voice to prevail in the event that we can't agree on something?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. How much of the overall enterprise culture, goals, policies, standards etc have been shaped by the majority culture?
2. Are minority groups given a real and equal voice in terms of shaping procedure, rules standards and regulations?
3. Are systems in place to obtain broadly based cultural feedback when new rules or policies are written or introduced?

# Awareness and Climate AC-7

## **Overweight people inhibit their chances of career success**

Physical differences are often seen by many to be a minor source of discrimination or poor acceptance of diversity. However, particularly in circumstances where the physical difference is seen to be great, intolerance and exclusion can be both fast and direct.

Our concept of physical difference arises from our relative views of so-called 'normality'. For example, men or women of a certain height are expected to be between an upper and lower limit in terms of weight. Although underweight people can suffer some critical intolerance, it is overweight individuals that tend to face the much greater problem in organizational terms. Even nondietary obesity is often seen to be an unwanted non-conformance to the way that people should look to be 'professional'.

Best practice organizations are much more openly tolerant of individuals physical shape, size and weight and promote a climate of non criticism of any physical characteristics 'positive or negative'.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I find myself reviewing other people's physical size or weight when it doesn't conform to my so-called 'normal' range?
2. Do I communicate or interface with overweight or underweight people in the same way as other people in the organization?
3. Is my thinking inhibited in terms of people's intelligence or ability, in terms of my seeing them as limited or impaired by their physical condition or shape?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. How well do we promote an open climate in which physical shape or size do not matter?
2. How proactive are we in ensuring that no unnecessary or negative comments are made about weight or physical appearance in general?
3. Are people of all shapes and sizes seen in the more senior positions of the enterprise?

## 2. LEVELS OF INCLUSION

Once everyone in the organization has a heightened awareness of cultural diversity, the organization is ready to look at the extent to which people are afforded fair and free involvement and inclusion in the major decisions that are made by the enterprise, or the collective processes that cause action to be taken. This typically involves a rigorous appraisal of whether or not all recognizable groups and individuals are included in key discussions, meetings, or collaborations, and that their opinions are given equal weight and are truly valued.

Organizational decision-making usually takes place at many levels within a commercial enterprise, starting with the governing board or board of directors and the executive team, and extending to advisory groups, committees, task forces, and action teams. All of these groups should ideally represent as many people as they can across the enterprise-not reflect only one or two majority groups. Every decision-making team should reflect a balance of gender, religious or racial groups, age, and any other relevant common interests as much as this is possible.

Include a wide variety of people at all levels of organizational decision-making. It will help you avoid appearing to concentrate power in the hands of only a few. A balanced approach also provides representation of a wide range of interests in a direct way, and creates a greater sense of perceived fairness and honesty.

Be sure you avoid doing anything that smacks of tokenism. This structural inclusion policy should create useful role models for the various interest groups to emulate. In more informal circumstances, it can help you make sure that all decision-making is based on broad input and opinion in order to strengthen the decisions made and solicit wider support and commitment. It is especially important that you ask for this input before making the decisions.

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open climate:

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Reflect on whether or not you think that power is mainly vested in the hands of a majority group, and why.
2. Review the potential limitations of beliefs or the extent to which some groups are being excluded from organizational decision-making.
3. Look at the people represented at the decision-making meetings you attend and ask why some groups are not represented directly.

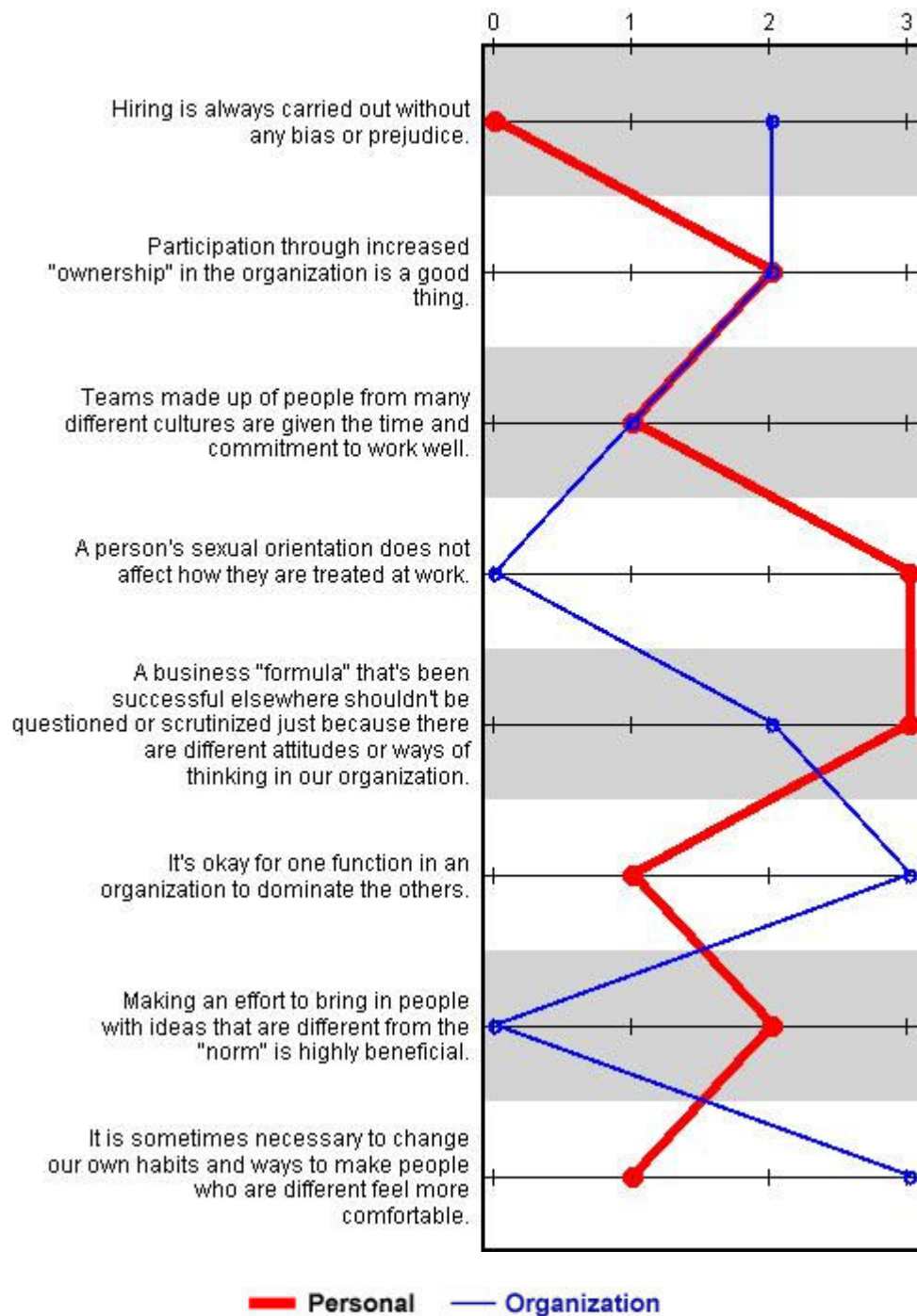
### FOR THE ORGANIZATION

1. Look for representation from as many groups as possible in major meetings or in committees that make policy decisions.
2. Encourage all meeting planners to invite participation from individuals who represent different organizational interests.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 13 out of a possible 24

Organization: 13 out of a possible 24



# Levels of Inclusion LI-1

## **Hiring is always carried out without any bias or prejudice**

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) is often both a legal requirement (in many societies) as well as a strong policy commitment in many enterprises. However, this does not necessarily mean that hiring practices are always free of bias and/or prejudice. The law as well as having a stated EEO policy is only a foundational step in fair recruitment process. To be entirely without prejudice or bias the process therefore also needs to look at:

- The way that candidate specifications are written
- The way that internal and external advertisements are written
- The diversity of culture of people doing any pre-screening
- The diversity of culture of people carrying out any interviewing or other assessment
- The diversity of culture of people carrying out the final hiring decision
- The way that the successful applicants are invited to join the organization

Best practice organizations make sure that all of these steps are fairly designed at the outset and ensure that training is available to every individual that is involved in recruitment/hiring decisions in any way.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I carry any preconceptions about any categories of job applicants-are they reasonable and fair?
2. Do I consciously maintain an open, flexible and balanced attitude to applicants for job roles at any stage of the hiring process in which I am involved?
3. Is my ultimate assessment of other people based on fact and evidence rather than guesses, assumptions and stereotypes?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we have a comprehensive and well-rounded EEO policy covering every step of the hiring process?
2. Is the EEO policy applied fairly and consistently by every person that is involved in the hiring process (inside and outside the enterprise)?
3. Is effective EEO training available to all individuals involved in the hiring process?

# Levels of Inclusion LI-3

**Teams with a lot of different cultures or a diverse make up are given the time and commitment to work well**

Many organizations 'launch' racial harmony, equal opportunity and other diversity and cultural awareness programs with loud fanfares and particular targets to be achieved with a certain timeframe. Unfortunately, many approaches are far too 'task' focused or deadline driven, expecting tangible results in weeks and months (regardless of their relative starting point). When targets are often slipped or failure is experienced the program falters and the 'overall culture' slowly slips back into its pre-launch state (or perhaps a little further back than it was before).

All serious cultural diversity efforts need to have a long term focus and need to be seen as an on-going commitment, not a project with a beginning, middle and end. In addition, as changes to approach are introduced, time, resources and commitment to success are needed.

Best practice organizations create a patient and committed climate by setting very loose objectives for their diversity efforts and by making sure that unhelpful targets and milestones are not set or are only used to check progress and then review the energy to do more wherever necessary.

Ask the following questions:

## **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I have the time and freedom to work on my relationships with people from other cultures?
2. Does my organization demonstrate the commitment that I need to take positive action to bring about greater cultural diversity?
3. Do I avoid imposing arbitrary deadlines and time pressure on other people to relate more effectively?

## **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we have a realistic view of how long it takes to help people from different cultures to work together successfully?
2. Are our diversity objectives/goals and targets loose and flexible enough to give people the time that they genuinely need?
3. Have we been successful in not imposing outcomes that must be achieved by a particular date or time?

# Levels of Inclusion LI-7

## **Making an effort to bring in people with very different ideas to the 'norm' or is highly beneficial**

The dangers of 'groupthink' (or everyone failing to think independently from the group) have become quite widely publicized in recent times. However, groupthink problems can apply to much more than just a few people and may affect whole organizations. This happens when enterprises expect high levels of compliance with senior management decisions hierarchical authority in general or merely the rules and regulations that exist.

In such situations individuals and groups may have either broadly similar ideas or self regulate any ideas that they feel will be difficult for the culture to accept. Consequently, new ideas and fresh creative input can often be more difficult to generate and competitive 'edge', harder to generate.

Best practice organizations aim to promote free or even 'maverick' thinking and thinkers. Maverick contributors are therefore regularly invited to help ensure that new ideas are stimulated in group discussions and to further ensure that the possibility of groupthink is minimized.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I think independently when asked to make decisions without reference to others before deciding?
2. Am I prepared to 'speak up', challenge organizational 'wisdom' or disagree with a majority view when I feel it is appropriate or necessary?
3. Do I regularly talk to other people in the organization whose views I know to be very different and even contrary to my own?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we nurture a climate in which people are encouraged to speak out, give honest opinion and play devil's advocate where necessary?
2. Do we allow individuals to run with speculative or "maverick" ideas and thoughts to create an atmosphere of challenge and low tolerance of mediocrity?
3. Do we actively guard against groupthink when we have to make important decisions?

### **3. LEVELS OF TOLERANCE & UNDERSTANDING**

An organization that makes sure a wider representation of views is factored into overall decision-making isn't out of the clear: Levels of tolerance toward diversity and understanding about cultural differences might not have changed and might even have deteriorated. This isn't unusual; power bases of individuals and groups with past vested interest are changing and people aren't sure how they are expected to act in the "new world."

Research has demonstrated that levels of tolerance are related to the extent to which people can accept and live with a high level of general ambiguity or uncertainty. In other words, the more individuals can quietly and calmly accept that they don't fully understand why someone thinks or acts or looks differently (and they remain open-minded), the more comfortable they will be with cultural diversity.

In general, intolerant individuals are more aggressive, cynical, and authoritarian in their attitudes. They want people to conform to pre-set mental models of behavior and appearance. Differences of any kind are threats to this ordered world of certainty, and they are likely to overtly and covertly resist such differences.

You can break down intolerance and reject it by exposing people (or yourself) to different attitudes and beliefs, and through continuing education. Organizations must encourage their people to offer different perspectives, be different, and not conform to pre-set norms that have perhaps successfully prevailed in the past. Their leaders must value and show that they value this free-flow of ideas and self-expression.

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open climate:

#### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Read articles and books on other cultures and on the subject of diversity.
2. Set up systems and procedures by which widespread input is invited as a matter of course before decisions are made.
3. Calmly and quietly accept situations that you do not fully understand, and take more time drawing conclusions or making judgments.

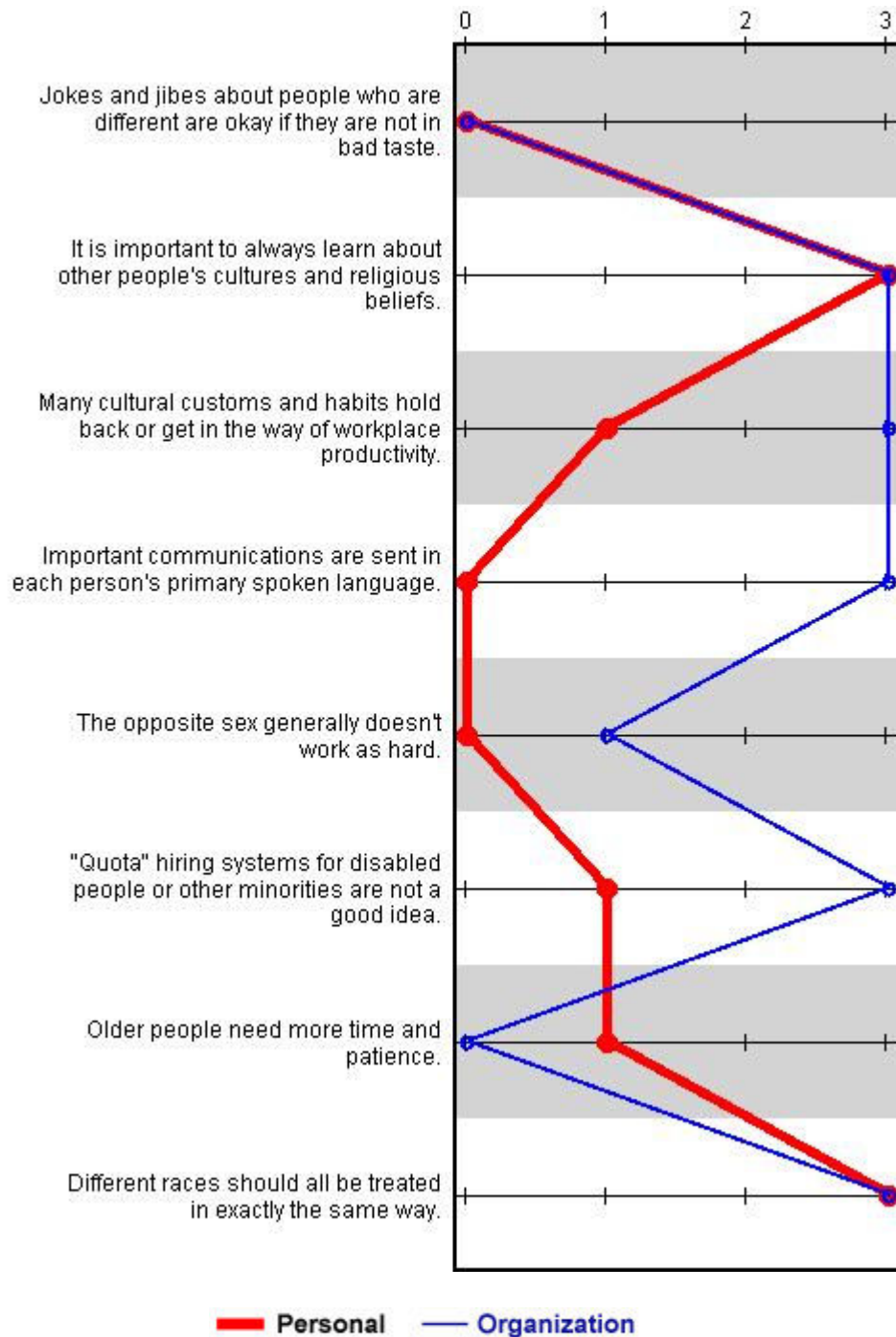
#### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Encourage individuals to accept uncertainty as a normal reaction in some circumstances, and coach people to seek more information before making final decisions.
2. Put people of different backgrounds and cultures together as teams to complete a short-term task or project together.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 9 out of a possible 24

Organization: 16 out of a possible 24



# Levels of Tolerance and Understanding LTU-1

## **Jokes and jibes about people that are different are OK if they are not in bad taste**

An extremely common way to deal with cultural diversity is to laugh at the difference, ridicule it or make jokes. This kind of behavior typically arises as a result of poor and limited understanding about another culture or as a way of reinforcing a majority culture behavior as being 'normal'. Most jokes and jibes about culture arise from the general stereotypes and broad brush caricatures (a typical Jew, gay person, woman, blind person, old person, etc).

As with any stereotypes, at the particular level they are usually extremely inaccurate and can therefore often give offense to an individual or an entire group of people (even if the majority culture enjoys the humor). In this sense, all jokes and jibes that help to reinforce external social or cultural stereotypes can be seen to be in bad taste, even where they are relatively uncritical. Best practice organizations work hard to educate every individual from every culture to avoid jokes, jibes and caricatures of other cultures and diverse groups, including making any unhelpful remarks or innuendo (such as sexual comments) entirely unacceptable.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Are jokes or stories that I tell insensitive to other cultures?
2. Do I intentionally or unintentionally make fun of people who are different to me?
3. Do I speak up when others are making insensitive or critical remarks about a particular group or culture?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we tolerate critical, cruel or insensitive comments without making comment or taking action?
2. Have we drafted and communicated our policy position on how people and groups should be treated in the organization?
3. Have we designed and delivered education to every individual on how they should avoid unhelpful remarks, undue culture criticism or innuendo at all times?

# Levels of Tolerance and Understanding LTU-5

## **The opposite sex generally doesn't work as hard**

Although there are many diversity issues that need to be tackled in almost every enterprise, the specific range or mix of issues will vary considerably from one organization to the next. Some will spend most of their time managing cultural difference in race or skin color, whilst others will be managing differences in religious beliefs or sexual preferences. However, the one issue that is common to all workplaces is gender difference. This arises even in single gender enterprises as they deal with mix genders in their suppliers, sub contractors and customers.

Gender loyalty and association is strong in both males and females and is often reinforced relentlessly in society (particularly by the media). This can result in some very deep stereotypes about the other sex that act as powerful mental filters in the workplace. One of these stereotypes is that the opposite gender is inferior or doesn't work as hard (or doesn't make the same contribution). Such pejorative views clearly inhibit full empathy and co-operation and can lead to some unacceptable behavior at individual level.

Best practice organizations actively attack gender bias and look to encourage factual information about the opposite sex based on real experience and knowledge.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I have lots of friends and colleagues of the opposite gender?
2. Do I treat the opposite gender as contributing at an equal overall level?
3. Am I prone to occasionally criticizing or demeaning individuals from the opposite gender more than my own?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we have a clear understanding of how "gender balanced" overall attitudes are at the moment?
2. Are individuals encouraged to work in mixed gender groups regularly to gain deeper awareness and a factual understanding of the opposite sex?
3. Do we have a fast response process for any unfair gender criticism or bias that exists in the enterprise when it occurs?

# Levels of Tolerance and Understanding LTU-7

## **Older people need more time and patience**

Perhaps it is because of commonplace sayings that old dogs cannot learn new tricks that older people in the workforce are generally seen to be slower and in need of more time and patience to help them to properly understand. Of course, the aging process inevitably takes its toll, causing older people to often operate physically in a slower way (although this does not apply to everyone of course!). However, even if this is broadly true at a physical level, this is rarely true mentally, where it could be argued that wisdom of experience helps older people to think both more efficiently and to perhaps concentrate on these issues of greatest significance.

As with other convenient categories of people, there are very strong often negative stereotypes about individuals in their 50-60's in the workplace. As people live longer and prevailing demographics in many countries shift the average employee age upwards significantly, such stereotypes will inevitably become highly limited.

Best practice organizations ensure that age discrimination of any kind is discouraged. This is made particularly important in recruitment, job moves and promotions.

Ask the following questions:

## **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I take time to talk to people who are considerably older than I am and look to gain their perspectives?
2. Do I actively give people who are older than myself respect for what they can do rather than for what they cannot?
3. Do I believe that people in their 50's and 60's should continue to be promoted in the organization?

## **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Are 'older' individuals offered job moves and promotions fairly at all levels in the enterprise?
2. Do we 'tap into' the experience and perspective that older individuals can bring to our creativity, problem solving and decision making processes?
3. How effective are our systems for dealing with unfair treatment of older people (for their relative slowness or physical shortcomings)?

## 4. DEGREE OF EMPATHY

Grudging or reluctant acceptance of workplace diversity that lacks true warmth and sincerity is not good enough, but it is a beginning. To move to the next level in the cultural awareness pyramid, individuals and the organization as a whole need to demonstrate open and genuine sensitivity to the needs of all kinds of "different" people, whatever their background, appearance, or beliefs. They need to find many ways to empathize with them.

One of the greatest barriers to genuine empathy toward people who are perceived to be "different" is social stereotyping. Stereotyping is the process of ascribing or assigning particular behavioral traits to individuals on the basis of their apparent connection to or membership in a group. The stereotype might or might not be accurate, but in any case, it acts as a mental "filter" through which judgments can be made.

Stereotypes are typically used as a shorthand way to conveniently categorize people or to "simplify" individual reactions or determine how "the world" operates in general. People use stereotypes to describe race, religion, country of origin, gender, education, weight, height, age, accent, and many other categories.

Stereotypes will continue to prevail as long as people can avoid close associations with different people and groups (or they are arbitrarily kept apart). Higher levels of personal familiarity help us appreciate unique perceptions and beliefs and point out the limitations of stereotypical thinking. By increasing involvement and proximity, an individual's unique identity is highlighted and similarities (rather than differences) of reaction and feeling are consequently more recognizable and accepted.

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open climate:

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Eat lunch with at least one person of "difference" each week or month and find out how they feel about their involvement in the decision-making process.
2. Offer to directly help minority groups in the general community.
3. Think about the accuracy of your own mental stereotypes concerning people around you who come from different backgrounds or cultures.

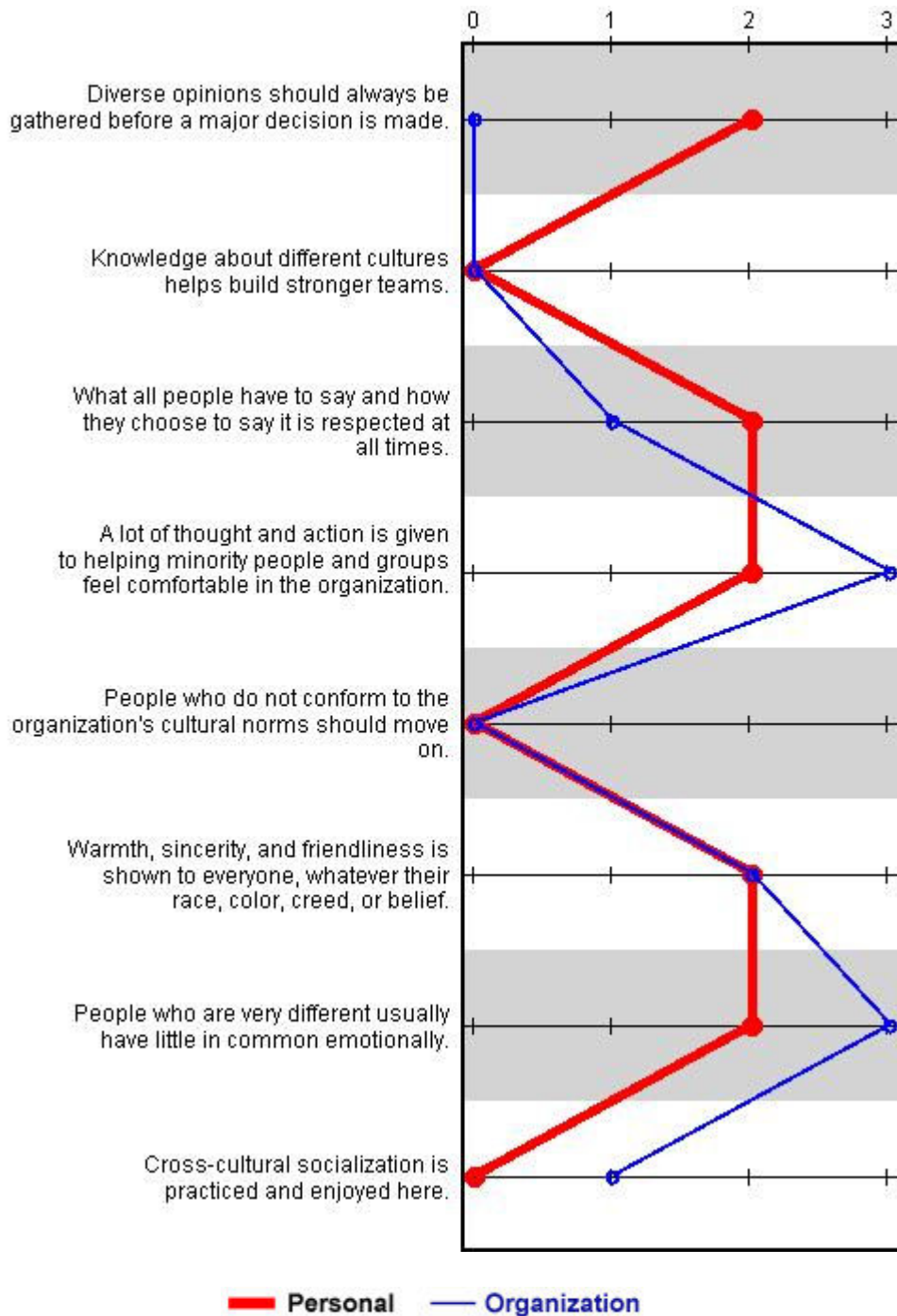
### FOR THE ORGANIZATION

1. Become more vigilant about changing existing stereotypes that limit or restrict us from healthy interaction and communication. Discuss this with friends or colleagues.
2. Find ways and means to publicly reward and recognize behaviors and actions that are positive and helpful to the effort to become a more openminded and diverse workplace.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 10 out of a possible 24

Organization: 10 out of a possible 24



# Degree of Empathy DE-1

## **Diverse opinion should always be gathered before a major decision**

Whatever the nature of the enterprise, its continued successful existence will be dependent upon the on-going decisions that it makes. In small businesses all decisions (small and large) are often made by one or two people. As an enterprise grows this may extend to several people and decisions may even be segregated into major and minor (or organization wide versus local). Remarkably, even in the largest organizations it is rare for most major decisions about finance or marketing or people policies to be made by more than a few people. Whilst this might bring the necessary speed and efficiency required, it inevitably concentrates power in the hands of a small number of people who may have many similarities in background, experience and even ways of thinking.

Best practice organizations recognize this potential limitation and set up effective processes to ensure that diverse opinions are always gathered and carefully considered before every major decision. This helps to ensure that the quality of the decision is maximized and that as many of the people in the enterprise as possible feel involved.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. How well do I recognize the value of different thinking styles and behaviors in others and have quick access to such people?
2. Do I look to check with people with very different views of cultural backgrounds before I make important organization decisions?
3. How many of my decisions are made by myself or by a few people that think in similar ways or styles?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we allow the time for wide and diverse consultation and input before major decisions have to be made?
2. Is input from a diverse range of cultures invited systematically where necessary?
3. Are systems and processes in place to facilitate two-way feedback and communication to every individual and group in the enterprise?

# Degree of Empathy DE-2

## **Much stronger teams are built through knowledge about different cultures**

Few organizations would dispute the benefits of good teamwork being a key part of their overall success formula. However, as much as some enterprises might try, effective teams are not created by proclamation or merely by forming people in to groups and asking them to work together closely. The most successful teams know a lot about each other and use this knowledge to bring about as much alignment as possible.

High performance teams do not need to understand each other well at a personal level (although this often helps). It usually means understanding specific skills, styles, preferences and interests that exist for each person. This information can then be used to look for complimentary ways for people to work together and as a means by which to discover specific gaps that need to be discussed and filled.

Best practice organizations aim to create a climate in which team members find it easy to discover each others skills, styles, preferences and interests, including those arising from different cultures to which they belong or are associated.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. How much do I know about my fellow work colleagues or team mates in terms of their preferences, interests, general skills, etc?
2. Do I spend enough time in talking to my work colleagues to discuss what they believe or feel to be important and to discover particular preferences and styles?
3. How proactive am I in looking for opportunities to work with new or different people to help build better teamwork and co-operation?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. To what extent do we look to ensure that teams have a healthy mix of cultures or a high diversity of individuals working together in teams?
2. How well do we 'balance' teams to ensure a rich mix of interest, preference styles and skills so that people can learn from one another?
3. Are team leadership positions occupied by individuals from varied cultures in the enterprise?

# Degree of Empathy DE-5

## **People who do not conform to organizational cultural □ norms' should move on**

Majority cultures can be highly protective of their power and influence in many enterprises. This can result in active and passive resistance to change in a defensive way (to ensure that the prevailing □ status quo' is not upset in any way). However, if the majority culture feels under significant threat, resistance may be much more offensive, looking to draw attention to cultural disagreements or clashes of even the smallest kind. The purpose of doing this is to portray the majority culture as not only □ normal' but also the most harmonious productive and efficient means by which to ensure organizational success. Other cultures (and particularly large ones) are therefore portrayed as regressive, harmful to productivity and teamwork and gratuitously criticized for their differences in behavior and action. In these circumstances, extreme pressure is often exerted on individuals to conform to the majority culture or to move on to an enterprise in which their culture can be better accommodated.

Best practice organizations guard carefully against a majority culture wielding its power and influence to attack or discriminate against minority cultures and invest even more time and energy into promoting the benefit of cross cultural teamwork and collaborative effort. This may even extend to tangible reward and recognition for those that demonstrate positive action (to help act as a role model to others).

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I passively or actively support and help strengthen the majority culture in the enterprise?
2. Do I portray the majority culture as □ normal' and expect other cultures to conform to some extent?
3. Am I dismissive of other minority cultures (either defensively or offensively)?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we have an efficient means by which to recognize a majority culture pressuring individuals from minority cultures to conform?
2. Are we ready to act quickly and firmly when any kind of cultural discrimination or attacks occur?
3. Do we have tangible reward and/or recognition systems for individuals that engage in positive cross-cultural behavior?

# Degree of Empathy DE-8

## **Cross cultural socialization is practiced and enjoyed**

Building cross cultural empathy cannot be done successfully or in a sustainable way by being merely warm and friendly with individuals, irrespective of their culture. The building of true empathy involves getting to know other people at a deeper level and start to experience how they may see the world around them through their eyes. Although this is possible to some extent with the work environment, the opportunities for 'free exchange' are likely to be limited and individuals are unlikely to open up completely in the more formal climate that most enterprises create.

One successful way to help build deeper levels of empathy between people is through socialization (or engage in social contact within and outside work). In many organizations this occurs in cultural cliques or groups. However, if it is done across the stronger cultures that exist it can quickly break down barriers and extend relationships considerably.

Best practice organizations encourage general socialization and even assist in orchestrating social get-togethers in various forms that can allow people from different cultures to work, play and relax together on a regular basis.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. How much do I want to get to know people from completely different cultures at a much deeper relationship level?
2. Do I regularly socialize at work with people from other cultures or who are very different to myself?
3. Do I look to make friends with individuals from different cultures outside the work environment?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Have we created a strong culture of socialization between employees, inside and outside working hours?
2. Are specific opportunities or events designed and made available to everyone to increase overall levels of socialization?
3. Do the organization leaders or supervisors get involved in social activity to act as role models to others?

## 5. DEGREE OF ADAPTATION & CHANGE

You will have to approach the idea of cultural diversity informally at first. A relatively slow and patient build-up of awareness allows the organization to come to terms with shifts in attitudes concerning the involvement of groups that previously had little or no involvement in so-called "mainstream" enterprise processes. However, at an appropriate point, leaders need to signal the organization's formal commitment to supporting diversity at every level and to bringing about structural adaptation and change to past practices.

The tools available to an organization to formerly change or to adapt on a permanent basis typically involve written policies, procedures, standards, and rules that will govern how people are expected to work together to achieve appropriate and acceptable results to the level or standards of performance required. These tools can be used for a range of processes and systems, including:

- The way that people are hired
- Objective-setting and appraisal
- Promotion and career development
- Communication processes
- Rewards and recognition
- Training and development

Policies and procedures can be amended or entirely rewritten to promote and support greater acceptance of cultural diversity (and tolerance of difference) as a primary organizational requirement, and one that will be rewarded in a variety of ways. However, it should be recognized that changes in policy are unlikely to be enough to ensure long-term adaptation and change. Everyone has to commit to implementing any policy so that changes take place in ways that are practical, meaningful, and visible for all to see. If this is also supported by visible behavior on the part of managers, their actions will serve as powerful and positive models for others to emulate.

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open climate:

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Form or serve on a committee that reviews policies designed to help promote greater diversity.
2. Volunteer to work with groups or cultures unfamiliar to you.
3. Start to learn a new language.

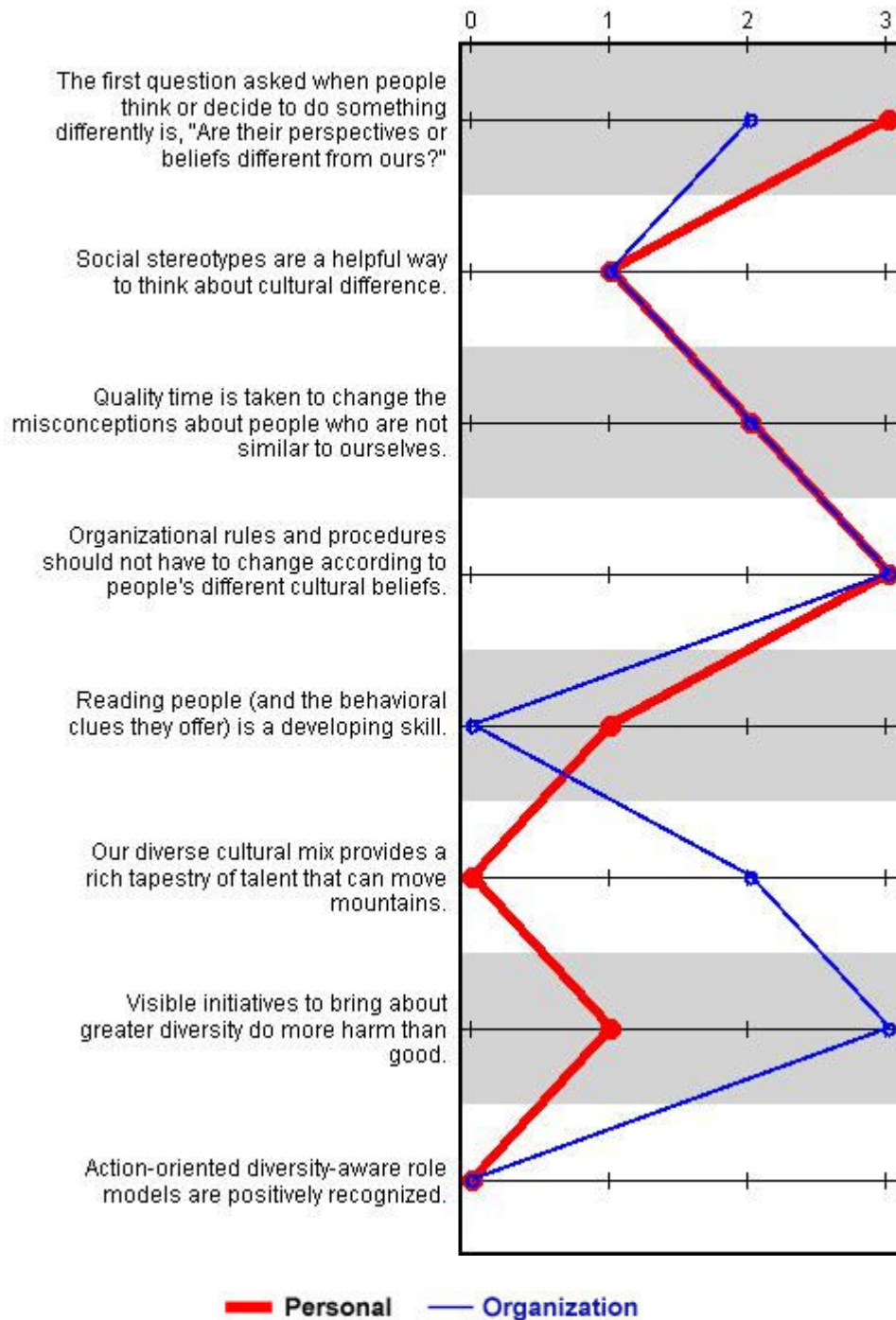
### FOR THE ORGANIZATION

1. Review all the major policies and procedures of the organization to help encourage greater cultural diversity and awareness.
2. Make a point of publicizing one major policy change and the actions that you intend to take immediately as a result. Follow through and follow up.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 11 out of a possible 24

Organization: 13 out of a possible 24



# Degree of Adaptation and Change DAC-2

## **Challenge all social and cultural stereotypes □ including yours.**

Social stereotypes about whole groups of people exist largely as convenient ways to classify how an individual is likely to behave or act. Some of them are relatively harmless or even amusing, but obviously they are hurtful to somebody, even if they are obviously gross simplifications or exaggerations. If you use stereotypes to make decisions or as a way of circumventing real feedback and communication, you will destroy understanding and trust, not to mention waste an opportunity to form a more-realistic view. It is imperative that you work on becoming more aware and appreciative of a person's race, culture, age, and gender.

Best-practice organizations challenge each prevailing stereotype as it relates to reality and show their people that it is not reflective of individual behavior or action and is quite damaging to the organization in the long run.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. What are my particular personal stereotypes regarding race? Religion? Sexual preference or gender?
2. Do I actively seek to replace my stereotypical thinking about cultures with real data?
3. To what extent do I recognize that my stereotypes and assumptions about other cultures adversely affect some of my decisions?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Are processes or systems in place to quickly recognize popular social or cultural stereotypes in the organization so that they can be addressed?
2. What coaching, mentoring, education, or training is provided to help people overcome their limiting social stereotypes about others?
3. Are supervisors and leaders in the enterprise actively encouraged to challenge unfair, critical, or limiting stereotypes?

# Degree of Adaptation and Change DAC-5

## **Reading people (and the behavioral clues they offer) is a developing skill**

In some situations it is easy to spot a cultural group to which an individual may belong or associate themselves. They may declare their cultural interest or it may even be physically obvious (race or gender for example, although care to avoid stereotypes still needs to be exercised even in these cases). However, much of the time, an individual's overall culture is not so easily discoverable on the surface. As a result, people's culture or style has to be derived by reading their behavior or reflecting on what they say and do. The ability to carefully watch the behavioral clues that people offer and make rational and ultimately accurate judgments about what it means about their beliefs is a difficult skill to master. As such, specific education and time is needed to help every individual to develop in this area, as well as the opportunity to apply their progressive learning and knowledge.

Best practice organizations establish formal and informal means by which their employees can learn how to more accurately read other people's behavior and to more quickly identify what are likely to be their different cultural needs in relation to their own.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. How good are my skills at reading the behavior of people from other cultures or very different styles and backgrounds to my own?
2. Have I sought to improve my people "reading" skills through direct coaching and training?
3. How effective am I at carefully listening and watching people who are different to better appreciate their styles, attitudes or beliefs?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Does the culture of the enterprise encourage people to take careful notice of the different behavioral styles that exist?
2. Do we allow quality time for individuals to be informally coached in being able to better understand the behavioral clues that people offer?
3. Is direct formal training and development in people reading skills available to individuals?

# Degree of Adaptation and Change DAC-6

## **Our diverse cultural mix provides a rich 'tapestry' of talent that can move mountains**

Whenever any major initiative is undertaken to lift overall levels of awareness about cultural diversity, there is often considerable doubt about the real and tangible benefits. In fact, some may even see the effort as counterproductive in as much as it may distract them from what they may see to be more worthy goals. To be successful in the long term, not only do such doubts and frustrations need to be overcome, but every single person needs to be convinced that the cultural mix within the enterprise provides opportunities and possibilities to do entirely new and exciting things that can make an extremely positive contributor – even move proverbial mountains. This simply means that it should be widely seen that having a variety of different perspectives, attitudes, opinions and views can lead to more creativity, more effective problem solving and more balanced decision making and in combination, create competitive advantage over more mono-cultural enterprises.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Is my attitude to (and efforts to lift) cultural and diversity awareness been positive and healthy?
2. How naturally do I see the benefits and advantages of having a rich cultural mix?
3. Can I identify specific opportunities to leverage our cultural diversity to improve the organization and gain competitive advantage?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. How effectively do we promote the concept of diversity as being a rich tapestry of talent?
2. Do we draw upon our cultural diversity to help solve problems or to come up with more creative solutions?
3. Do we work hard enough to utilize our cultural diversity in the way we make decisions in the enterprise?

# Degree of Adaptation and Change DAC-8

**Recognize and reward those who demonstrate personal commitment to helping create a vibrant and diverse workforce and a healthy work environment for all.**

As your efforts bring about greater diversity start to have an impact (even in small ways), you will notice some individuals happily taking the lead by acting and behaving in diversity-conscious ways. Perhaps they are people for whom cultural diversity has always been an important issue, or individuals who are excited about this new cause. In either case, such people are important "pioneers" because they act as role models to others. Their behavior is more likely to be emulated.

It is important that the organization openly and publicly applaud and recognize the efforts of individuals who are action-oriented and diversity-conscious. Consider giving tangible or intangible rewards according to the circumstances; the important thing is that everyone should see some clear benefit to these individuals for their actions. This will help to convince others that they will also be positively regarded and recognized if they make similar efforts.

Ask the following questions:

## **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I try to demonstrate personal commitment and act as a "diversity" role model?
2. Do I observe people who focus on cultural diversity and help it strengthen the entire organization?
3. Do I emulate the positive efforts of others to appreciate the diversity within our organization? In what ways do I do this?

## **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. How effective are we at recognizing positive efforts to appreciate our diversity and/or action when it occurs?
2. Are diversity role models openly recognized for their efforts? On a consistent basis?
3. Are individuals tangibly rewarded (through job moves, promotions, etc.) for their positive attitude and efforts to improve and promote cultural awareness?

## **6. PERSISTENCE & COMMITMENT**

Successful organizations get that way and stay that way because of enduring conviction and commitment. A widespread cultural change of any sort takes considerable time, energy, and commitment. It makes enormous demands on the organization to achieve a permanent and sustainable level of success. However, it can lead to some difficult conflicts and negative impacts that will undermine the overall goal to establish cultural diversity as a valuable organizational strength. In such situations, the organization needs to maintain the courage of its convictions and persist in its objectives, despite opposition or discomfort.

The ultimate success of any effort to bring about widespread acceptance of diversity requires that you adopt two long-term planning strategies: One, focus on a model or a methodology for resolving conflict positively at all levels-perhaps widespread training and individual coaching, but more importantly, communicating a commitment to integrative or "win/win" resolutions, rather than "win/lose" encounters that can create ill will and resentment.

Secondly, attack subtle or obvious bias, prejudice, and discrimination that might have been driven "underground" because individuals see that it is now more openly difficult to resist diversity. The organization must develop a much more "assertive" intolerance toward people and groups that continue to demonstrate negative reactions: Apply more serious sanctions than were used in the past. Selectively remove such individuals from positions of authority and influence (and possibly from the enterprise as a whole).

In the final analysis, organizations cannot afford to be complacent if they want to create a comfortably diverse culture. They must continue to commit to educating people and advocate the benefits of the goal in relentless fashion.

Specific actions to increase awareness of cultural differences and create a more open climate:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

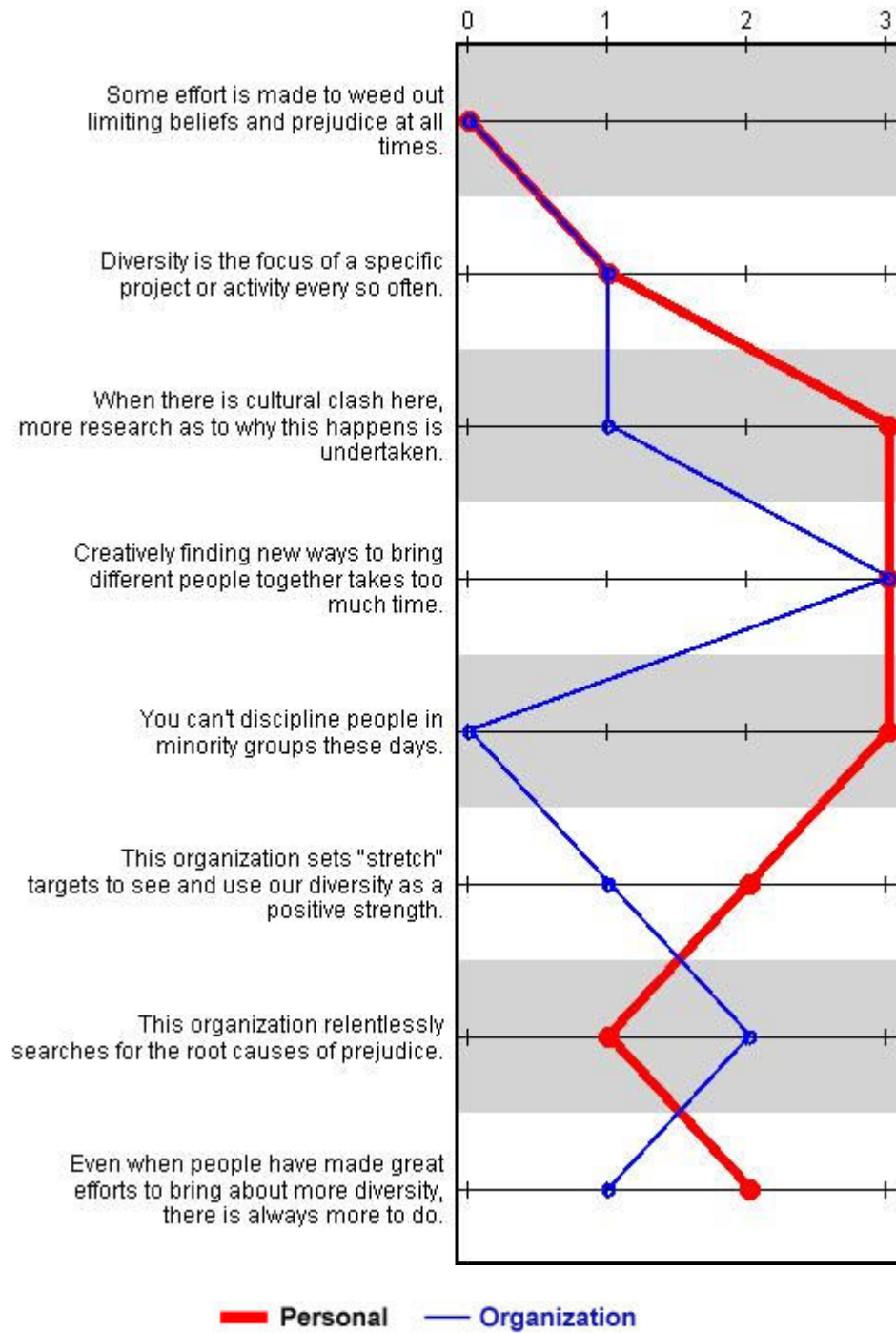
1. Regularly raise diversity and cultural awareness as a topic of discussion in meetings and forums.
2. Test all major decisions made by you or the organization to ensure that they are not discriminatory in any way.
3. Work harder at finding win/win solutions that benefit as many people with differing interests as you can.

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Invoke sanctions on individuals and groups that continue to discriminate.
2. Offer conflict resolution training and coaching to all those who would benefit from it.

## Summary Scores

Individual: 15 out of a possible 24  
 Organization: 9 out of a possible 24



# Persistence and Commitment PC-1

## **Some serious effort is made to □weed out' limiting beliefs and prejudice at all times**

Although it may take a long time before limiting beliefs, biases and prejudices about other cultures start to become the exception rather than the rule, if individuals and organizations are serious about significantly increasing diversity awareness, there comes a point when the people or groups that continue to hold unhelpful attitudes, need to be helped to finally come to terms with the issue. This means that prejudice and bias must become openly challenged and firmly stated to be unacceptable as a way of thinking or acting.

In some enterprises a □hard, collective core' of cultural prejudice may exist which needs to be challenged and permanently changed. In other enterprises, limiting beliefs and prejudice may be more individualized and sporadic. In both cases (and however hard nosed the resistance may be) at this point, often the best approach is to adopt a one to one coaching role (starting with the most resistant people first). These discussions need to discover why the prejudice exists at a detailed level and what can be done to change it for the better.

Best practice organizations tackle this issue on an on-going relentless basis and ensure that there are high levels of consistency between their diversity policy in words and their diversity action or ideas.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR INDIVIDUALS**

1. Do I feel uncomfortable about been required to become more diversity focused?
2. Am I prepared to ask for help to better appreciate whatever is required to become as culturally empathetic as possible (where necessary)?
3. Is the culture in this organization right for me in the longer term?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we consistently coach and actively steer individuals with poor attitudes to cultural diversity in general?
2. Are publicly expressed limiting beliefs, bias and prejudice strategically challenged?
3. Are we prepared to ask individuals to leave the organization where they are not prepared to change their behavior?

# Persistence and Commitment PC-2

## **Diversity is a specific project activity every so often**

Many organizations will be very familiar with an approach to a major organizational change of any sort being treated as a project, or something which is given special attention for a period of time. In such circumstances a senior organizational person is often assigned to the task of leading the project initiative and a considerable amount of time and resources may be diverted to help make the project a success.

Diversity and cultural awareness are often led in this way by treating the changes required as a specific project with goals and targets, a budget and even a person to lead the effort, often on a 'special' assignment. Unfortunately, unlike a project to build something, manage a relocation or market a new product or service, creating permanent and structural change to help make diversity a prevailing asset in the enterprise is a long-term journey. It is also a change that must be picked up in every quarter and by every individual (not just in the project team).

Best practice organizations recognize the limitation of project initiatives as the prime means by which to permanently change the enterprise, or to leverage its diversity for competitive advantage. They choose instead to hold line managers and individuals accountable, for the attitudes, behaviors and actions desired and expect this to be an everyday focus not just a short term objective every once in a while.

Ask the following questions:

### **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Do I see initiatives to increase diversity awareness as just another program or project that will have a beginning, middle and end over a relatively short time?
2. Do I try to make my personal diversity efforts an on-going part of my behavior and efforts in the work place rather than something to focus on as a specific goal or target only?
3. Am I prepared to challenge diversity project type thinking when I believe it may not be helpful?

### **FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

1. Do we treat diversity as a project to be tackled?
2. Do we set goals, targets and milestones based on shorter term project outcomes?
3. What efforts are we making to get better diversity appreciation into the everyday focus of people's on-going, long term working lives?

## Summary

This report has suggested that better appreciation of diversity, or other cultures in general, is a progressive journey for both the organization and the individual. We have suggested that this essentially involves coming to appreciate as much as you can about yourself and your own views and attitudes before looking to better appreciate those views and attitudes of those that you see to be different.

Although it has not been stated explicitly, we have been describing this journey in a step-by-step fashion, building on a solid foundation or base awareness of the diversity issues within the enterprise; of course, these are steps that many organizations may not get beyond. Ultimately, we have suggested that successful enterprises will make widespread changes to organizational culture and individual attitudes towards being more open and far less tolerant of any kind of discrimination, prejudice, and bias.

The six steps or stages do not have hard or fixed boundaries, and can be merged into one another or skipped altogether. However, for the most part, they reasonably reflect the stages that most committed organizations and individuals experience as they look to improve over time.

As we said at the outset, the ambitious aim has been to talk about how we bring about better human understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of other people, even when they are different to ourselves. Hopefully, we have provided some food for thought about how this might be done for each participant.

"Diversity involves a broad range of human uniqueness: personality, work style, perception, attitudes, values, lifestyle, work ethic, world view, communication style, and much more. Valuing diversity means appreciating and encouraging people to be who they really are, helping them to develop their full potential, and utilizing their special talents, skills, ideas, and creativity".

## My Contract For Change

1. My personal goals to manage diversity awareness more effectively in the future are :
    - a) \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  2. As a result I will make more time to achieve the goals by giving less priority to:
    - a) \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Each week I will record my progress by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. My support person(s) will be: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. My support person(s) will help me by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  6. I will use the following methods to maintain my momentum and learn along the way:
    - a) \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  7. I will reward myself for achieving my milestones by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  8. My end reward will be: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated** \_\_\_\_\_